

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

(FONSI)

PROPOSED NEW WORK DREDGING

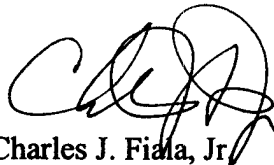
BALTIMORE HARBOR AND CHANNELS, MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA, 42-FOOT PROJECT - STRAIGHTENING OF THE TOLCHESTER CHANNEL S-TURN, MARYLAND

The Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in cooperation with the State of Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Port Administration, proposes to straighten the Tolchester Channel S-Turn at its authorized depth of -35 feet mean lower low water (MLLW) and width of 600 feet. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve navigation safety for vessels calling on the Port of Baltimore, through the Chesapeake and Delaware (C&D) Canal, by straightening the Tolchester Channel S-Turn. The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1999 directs the Secretary of the Army to straighten the Tolchester Channel S-Turn as a part of the overall maintenance of the Tolchester Channel project.

The "Proposed New Work Dredging, Baltimore, Harbor and Channels, Maryland and Virginia, Straightening of the Tolchester Channel S-Turn, Maryland, Environmental Assessment," evaluated the proposed dredging of material to straighten the Tolchester Channel S-Turn, and the placement of the dredged material at either Poplar Island or the Hart Miller Island (HMI) placement site. Potential impacts were assessed with regard to the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem, endangered and threatened species, hazardous and toxic substances, aesthetics and recreation, cultural resources, and the general needs and welfare of the public. In accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, a Section 404(b)(1) analysis was conducted for the proposed discharge of dredged material and is appended to the Environmental Assessment (EA). The analysis determined that the proposed project would have no significant adverse impacts to the aquatic ecosystem.

The EA was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and USACE Engineer Regulation 200-2-2 (33 CFR 230), "Procedures for Implementing NEPA."

Upon reviewing the attached EA, I find that the potential negative impacts to environmental resources associated with the implementation of the proposed action will not be significant and will occur over a relatively small area, and will be primarily short-term in nature. Based upon this finding, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



Charles J. Fiala, Jr.
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer